

STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS AND  
FINANCIAL AID SERVICES WITHIN SELECTED  
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
The School of Graduate Studies  
Drake University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

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by  
Michele Stipanovich Kirsch  
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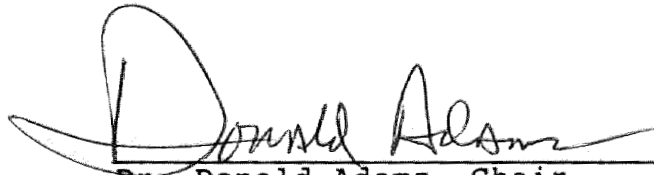
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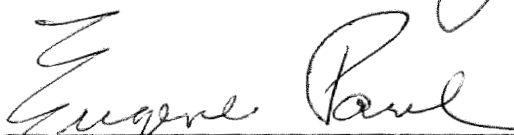
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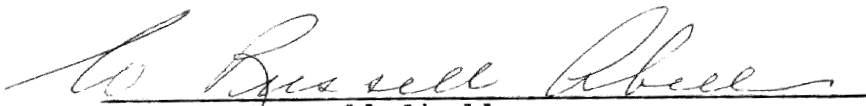
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An abstract of a Dissertation by  
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May 1986  
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The problem. This study was conducted to determine if the organizational structure of an institution's admissions and financial aid offices is related to student satisfaction with the quality of services provided by these offices.

Procedure. Three institutions were identified as having different organizational structures of admissions and financial aid operations. A random sample of undergraduate students from these three institutions participated in a telephone survey, responding to questions concerning their satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services. Responses were then analyzed using an analysis of variance to determine the extent of difference between student populations.

Findings. The results of this research indicated no statistically significant differences in student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services of different organizational structures. The findings did, however, indicate that freshmen were significantly more satisfied than continuing students on certain questions regarding admissions and financial aid services.

Conclusion. Freshmen proved to be significantly more satisfied with admissions and financial aid services than continuing students. The least amount of difference between freshmen and continuing students' satisfaction appeared within an institution operating with an enrollment management concept.

Recommendations. Further study examining the relationship between the organizational structure of admissions and financial aid operations and the extent of satisfaction felt by freshmen and continuing students would contribute more to the literature on admissions, financial aid and student retention. Additional research assessing satisfaction levels of parents, graduate students and non-traditional students could further impact the way in which institutions of higher education organize to best meet the needs of a changing student population.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

For the past twenty-five years, American higher education has experienced a period of growth and expansion. Legislative acts, such as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill) of 1944 and the National Defense Education Act of 1958 contributed to this growth with financial support for educational programming, research, and student aid.<sup>1</sup>

The emerging "baby boom" generation further contributed to this "golden age" of American higher education. Between 1955 and 1974, the number of college students increased from 2.5 million to 8.8 million. The percentage of young people who acknowledged the significance of a college degree also increased, as enrollment of eighteen to twenty-four year olds in 1974 reached 33.5 percent, compared to 17.8 percent in 1955.<sup>2</sup>

Institutions have responded to this growth by creating elaborate administrative structures, more physical

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<sup>1</sup>William Ihlanfeldt, Achieving Optimal Enrollments and Tuition Revenues (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>George Keller, Academic Strategy (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 8-9.

facilities and specialized programs to better serve their increasing enrollments. More college buildings were constructed between 1955 and 1974 than during the previous two hundred years of American higher education. This era saw the emergence of large comprehensive campus systems, the creation of regional branch campuses and the origination of the community college--a uniquely American institution.<sup>1</sup> This physical and programmatic expansion of higher education created new opportunities not only for millions of students but also for numerous faculty and administrators.<sup>2</sup>

Recent demographic trends, however, are indicating an end to the growth period, predicting serious enrollment declines through the 1990's. In 1994, there will be one million fewer eighteen year olds than there were in 1979, with a greater percentage being Blacks, Hispanics and Asians. The percentage of college students over the age of twenty-five is also expected to increase, affecting the traditional programs and course offerings provided by colleges and universities. Experts predict that, by 1995, between 10 and 30 percent of the country's 3,100 colleges and universities will close or merge with other institutions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Keller, pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup>Ihlanfeldt, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Keller, pp. 1, 13-14.

Institutions have chosen various ways to respond to the challenge of declining enrollments. Some have redefined their missions, no longer trying to be all things to all people. Others have chosen to become more aggressive, establishing a full-scale marketing plan and targeting a specific population. Still others have integrated both of these efforts and implemented an institutional strategic plan, initiating an active role in shaping the destiny of the institution.

Since the Civil War, the number of young people attending colleges and universities has increased steadily. The concept of declining enrollments and limited prospects for potential students is a totally novel concept in American higher education.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, institutions of higher education are undergoing a period of transition and reorganization. A system originally designed to meet the needs of a large student body will not adequately perform its services for a smaller population. Periods of retrenchment force institutions to restructure for fiscal reasons. Therefore, colleges and universities are reorganizing their services to improve their efficiency and overall effectiveness.

At the same time, institutions of higher education are being closely scrutinized by government officials and

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<sup>1</sup>Keller, pp. 1, 13-14.

society in general. The value of a college degree, relative to its cost, is seriously being challenged, and rising federal deficits are creating fiscal pressures on institutions charged with maintaining responsibility and accountability of millions of dollars of federal aid.<sup>1</sup>

American colleges and universities occupy a "special, hazardous zone" in society, somewhere between the profit-making business sector and government-owned state agencies. Institutions of higher education are dependent on societal forces but free from external control; they are market-oriented but outside cultural and intellectual fashions. Faculty have been characterized as "inventors" and "entrepreneurs" of knowledge, but also represent a profession synonymous with physicians and lawyers. Colleges and universities in the United States represent one of the largest industries in the nation but are among the least businesslike and well-managed of all organizations.<sup>2</sup>

Enrollment within higher education institutions has become the central issue through the 1990's. The stability and survival of many institutions will depend on the extent to which institutional leaders give attention to managing their

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<sup>1</sup>Ihlanfeldt, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Keller, p. 5.

enrollments.<sup>1</sup>

A recent trend of management and reorganization in higher education, emerging in the early 1980's, is that of enrollment management. As enrollments decline, institutions are increasingly interested in maintaining a sufficient number of students to ensure the health and survival of the institution, while still sustaining a quality student body. This concept of managing enrollments integrates related functions within an institution: functions which relate to the recruitment, retention and maintenance of enrollments. Enrollment management is defined as a process that influences the size, shape and characteristics of a student body by directing institutional efforts in marketing, recruitment and admissions as well as pricing and financial aid. Enrollment management is not simply an administrative process; it involves the entire campus.<sup>2</sup> It is not a new marketing strategy, but a new set of recruitment activities.<sup>3</sup>

Two vital functions within the enrollment management

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<sup>1</sup>George Keller, "Enrollment Management: The Leadership Role," Leadership for Enrollment Management, Chicago, IL, 10 July 1985.

<sup>2</sup>Don Hossler, Enrollment Management, An Integrated Approach (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1984), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>A. Steven Graff, "The Time Has Come," Enrollment Management Review, 1, No. 1 (Fall 1984), 1.

concept are admissions and financial aid. These two factors, together, exert a significant influence on attendance and persistence toward graduation.<sup>1</sup> A central role for financial aid, within an institutional marketing concept, can play a major difference in the way students feel about the institution. The cooperation between both admissions and financial aid is essential to any student recruitment effort.<sup>2</sup>

Researchers have explored the advantages and disadvantages of this enrollment management organizational concept with professionals in higher education. University presidents, administrators and faculty have all been involved, from an institutional perspective, in discussions of such efforts toward reorganization. However, college and university students, the consumers of institutional services, have seldom been included in the assessment of reorganizational plans. Historically, higher education has evolved with little or no direct input from its student consumers. The student revolt of the 1960's altered that pattern somewhat, but colleges and universities need to become even more responsive to student needs and interests

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<sup>1</sup>Don Hossler, "Managing Enrollments for Institutional Vitality," Leadership for Enrollment Management, Chicago, IL, 11 July 1985.

<sup>2</sup>Myron Van de Ven, "The Impact of Pricing and Student Aid on Enrollment Management at Public Universities," Leadership for Enrollment Management, Chicago, IL, 11 July 1985.

if, for no other reason, to resist the threat of economic insolvency.<sup>1</sup>

Before complex attempts at reorganization occur, it seems that direct consideration of student responses and reactions should take place. Without input from the primary recipients of institutional services, college and university officials are making decisions based on limited facts, relying on their perceptions of effectiveness, and ignoring an extremely valuable resource. Given the critical role of both admissions and financial aid services in student recruitment and retention, there is a need to determine what, if any, effect the organizational structure of these offices has on student satisfaction with the services provided.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted as an attempt to determine if the organizational structure of an institution's admissions and financial aid offices is related to student satisfaction with the quality of services provided by these offices.

#### Hypotheses

The major null hypothesis tested in this study is:

There is no difference in student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services among different organizational structures.

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<sup>1</sup>Ihlanfeldt, pp. 2-3.

The minor hypothesis is:

There is no difference in student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services between freshmen and continuing students.

### Significance of Study

The organization of admissions and financial aid offices has been a controversial topic since the two offices came into existence. Recent projections of enrollment declines have caused colleges and universities to further re-examine their organizations and how they deliver these services to students. Higher education, in general, is experiencing a transitional period, with some institutions maintaining traditional patterns of organization, while others are reorganizing in new and different ways to improve upon already existing services.

The offices of admissions and financial aid are in the center of these efforts toward reorganization. There appears to be no consistent organizational pattern among different institutions. Administrators tend to organize these offices based on past experience and perceived advantages and disadvantages.

A research study that elicits student attitudes toward this issue could provide accurate and valuable information to university administrators. Student reactions contribute an entirely different dimension to the issue, possibly affecting future efforts of reorganization.



### Definitions

Freshmen: full-time undergraduate students attending a university for the first time in the Fall of 1985.

Continuing students: full-time undergraduate students returning to an institution attended previously.

Admissions: the operation within a university environment responsible for the screening, reviewing and admitting of applicants to the institution.

Financial Aid: the process of administering federal, state, institutional and local financial assistance programs, including grants/scholarships, loans and employment.

Contact with admissions and financial aid offices: communication with these offices, either through correspondence, personal visits or telephone.

Enrollment management: a process that influences the size, shape and characteristics of a student body by directing institutional efforts in marketing, recruitment and admissions as well as pricing and financial aid.<sup>1</sup>

### Limitations

1. This study concentrated only on undergraduate, bachelor's degree-seeking students.

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<sup>1</sup>Hossler, Enrollment Management, An Integrated Approach, p. 6.

2. The results and conclusions of this study are directly applicable to only the three institutions involved in the research.

3. The population included in this study was limited to students accepted to one of the three participating institutions.

4. An attempt was made to control for as many variables existing between institutions (institutional size, cost of attendance, etc.). However, it should be recognized that there were some variables beyond the control of the researcher (i.e., personalities of the personnel within each office).

#### Assumptions

1. It is assumed that student responses will be honest and sincere.

2. It is assumed that, by virtue of their inclusion on institutional enrollment lists, all students will have had some contact with the university admissions office.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

#### Historical Perspective

The origins of the admissions office can be found in medieval universities in the ancient office of the archivist (the forerunner of what is known today as the registrar).<sup>1</sup> During the early years of American higher education, admissions functions were performed by the faculty of an institution; a full-time admissions administrator did not exist. As higher education grew and the university structure emerged, campus environments and services became more specialized. The professor became concerned strictly with instruction and research, leaving little or no time for administrative details. The concept of academic administration emerged, leaving student recruitment responsibilities to academic deans and presidents. It was not until after World War I that a separate admissions office, as it exists today, came into being.<sup>2</sup> The role of

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Perry, The Admissions Officer--Educator, Administrator, or Professional? (Toledo, OH: Univ. of Toledo, 1964), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Laurence Veysey, "Undergraduate Admissions: Past and Future," Colloquium on Marketing, Student Admissions and the Public Interest, Racine, WI, 7 Nov. 1979, pp. 7-8.

the admissions officer has included that of an administrator, statistician, clerk, educator, public relations expert, secondary school analyst and financial aid expert.<sup>1</sup>

Programs of financial assistance originated in admissions offices. For the first 250 years of American higher education, student financial aid was not an organized, systematic function. It had, however, become an integral part of higher education as institutions recognized the need for generating financial resources to ensure enrollment.<sup>2</sup>

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (GI Bill) initiated the involvement of the federal government in the financing of a student's college education. This act drew society's attention to financial aid and the government's role in higher education. It was not until 1958, however, with the passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), that the financial aid profession began to emerge. As a response to the Russian launching of Sputnik, the NDEA created a low-cost loan program for college students. Several states followed suit and began creating their own

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<sup>1</sup>Perry, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph J. Godzicki, "A History of Financial Aids in the United States," in Money, Marbles or Chalk? Student Financial Support in Higher Education, eds. Frank C. Adams, Roland Keene, and John E. King (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1975), p. 18.

scholarship programs to help students meet college costs.<sup>1</sup>

As federal, state and institutional aid programs grew, institutions began creating separate aid offices to manage the many programs.<sup>2</sup> Homer Babbidge emphasized the importance of central control: "A good financial aid program is centralized . . . it is important that a student go to a single place and deal with a single staff in all matters of financial assistance."<sup>3</sup> The impact of rising college costs made it necessary for institutions to effectively present, to students and parents, a clear picture of expenses and resources available. A centrally-coordinated aid office was the solution to this increased demand for information.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, separate offices of student financial aid were created on college campuses across the country. The primary philosophical purpose of these offices was to provide financial assistance to

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<sup>1</sup>Anne C. Roark, "Federal Student Aid and How It Grew," The Chronicle of Higher Education, 11 Oct. 1977, p. 5, cols. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup>Joe B. Henry, "Current Issues in Student Financial Aid," Journal of College Student Personnel, 5 (Dec. 1963), 89-92, 102.

<sup>3</sup>Homer D. Babbidge, Jr., Student Financial Aid--Manual for Colleges and Universities, Student Personnel Series No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Association, 1960), p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Vernon R. Alden, "The Expanding Role of Admissions and Financial Aid Officers," in Student Financial Aid and Institutional Purpose, ed. College Entrance Examination Board (Princeton, NJ: College Entrance Examination Board, 1963), p. 1.

students who, without such aid, would be unable to attend the institution.<sup>1</sup> In 1972, the first full-time office of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators was established, acknowledging the significance of the financial aid profession.<sup>2</sup>

The business of financial aid, since its inception, has become a major force in higher education. It has grown from a simple clerical function contained within the admissions office into a profession of its own, claiming responsibility for the administration of over \$16 billion a year.<sup>3</sup>

#### Growth of the Admissions and Financial Aid Professions

The creation of a separate financial aid office resulted in a need for coordination between the offices of student aid and admissions. Two offices, fully staffed, with established policies and procedures, were created for the purpose of improving service to prospective and enrolled students. As a result of two different offices processing aid and admissions' applications, students received better and quicker attention and an increase in personalized service. There was a more effective allocation of money,

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<sup>1</sup>William D. Van Dusen, "Toward a Philosophy of Financial Aid Programs," NASPA Journal, 4 (July 1966), 6.

<sup>2</sup>Robert A. Scott, "The Paradox of Financial Aid," College Board Review, 108 (Summer 1978), 32-34.

<sup>3</sup>Chester E. Finn, Jr., "Student Aid: Orderly and Equitable," Change, 16 (Nov./Dec. 1984), 62.

and information was released in a timelier, more efficient manner.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the two professions developed as independent entities, demanding autonomy and professional status. Financial aid officers worked to gain the respect of their colleagues in higher education, but still found themselves being closely associated with admissions officers, whom they considered as "salespeople in routine fields."<sup>2</sup>

#### Roles and Responsibilities of Admissions and Financial Aid Officers

Since the emergence of both the admissions and financial aid professions, a number of researchers have concentrated on the specific responsibilities of the admissions and financial aid officers. Arthur Haley conducted one of the first studies on the duties of the Director of Admissions, concluding that the position was more administrative in nature than counseling oriented.<sup>3</sup> Research done by Richard Perry in 1964 concluded that admissions officers' duties were growing in complexity, with

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<sup>1</sup>Walter M. North, "Advance Financial Planning for Student Aid Programs," in Student Financial Aid and Institutional Purposes, ed. College Entrance Examination Board, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>Scott, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Arthur F. Haley, "An Analysis and Critique of the Full-Time Director of Admissions in American Colleges and Universities," Dissertation Abstracts International, 21 (1960), 3323-24 (Boston University School of Education).

an increasing demand for communication and organizational skills. The major responsibilities, reported by admissions officers, included secondary school contacts, enrollment predictions, admissions decisions and awarding of financial aid.<sup>1</sup>

One of the earliest and most significant studies done on the responsibilities of the admissions officer was conducted by Hauser and Lazarsfeld in 1964. Their survey of 811 admissions directors and 476 assistants resulted in one of the most comprehensive analyses of the admissions profession. During the time of their study, the admissions field was in a state of transition, moving from a subsidiary function to an autonomous, specialized operation. Data received by Hauser and Lazarsfeld supported the apparent movement toward specialization. However, among those directors characterized as specialists, 76 percent responded that financial aid to freshmen was an "intrinsic" part of their job.<sup>2</sup>

A more current survey of admissions officers' responsibilities was conducted in 1975. This study discovered a growing concern among admissions officers over the increase in competition among institutions and the

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<sup>1</sup>Perry, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Jane Z. Hauser and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, The Admissions Officer in the American College: An Occupation Under Change (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1964), pp. I-2, III-17.



decline of available applicants. Thirty percent of the private institutions and 3 percent of the public institutions reported that their admissions office had some responsibility for financial aid.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, higher education literature indicates significant attention devoted to roles and responsibilities of the financial aid officer. Several authors have stressed the importance of the counseling process as part of an aid administrator's position.<sup>2</sup> Lenn has identified the development of the financial aid officer from technician to counselor to professional, with each step demanding an increase in skills and a new image of policy maker within the institution.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to the admissions studies, Puryear conducted a survey of junior college aid administrators to determine their specific responsibilities. Thirty-three percent reported responsibility for admissions work, and 21 percent of that 33 percent actually handled freshmen

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<sup>1</sup>Lucky Abernathy, "Highlighting What's New in Admissions," The College Board Review, 100 (Summer 1976), 30-34.

<sup>2</sup>Van Dusen, p. 5; Kenneth A. Kohl and Irene C. Kohl, Financing College Education, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), p. 11; Robert J. Kates, "Financial Aid," in Handbook of College and University Administration, ed. Asa S. Knowles (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), pp. 7-155.

<sup>3</sup>D. Jeffrey Lenn, "Ethical Issues in Financial Aid Management," The College Board Review, 121 (Fall 1981), 12.

admissions.<sup>1</sup>

The financial aid officer has also been declared a professional educator. It is the responsibility of the aid officer to emphasize the educational potential of all aid programs and remain consonant with the educational mission of the institution.<sup>2</sup>

Moon and North argued that the financial aid office should be organized separately from the admissions office. However, it should still assist in the recruitment of students, be represented in admissions decisions and be more aware of institutional policy beyond need determination of student resources.<sup>3</sup>

Future challenges for both financial aid and admissions officers have been clearly defined. The role of the admissions officer will become even more prominent in the near future. The individual in that position will be able to influence the destiny of any campus in the country. The admissions officer plays a crucial role in guiding the president, the board and faculty toward an understanding of

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<sup>1</sup>James B. Puryear, "A Descriptive Study of Certain Characteristics of Financial Aid Services and Officers in Junior Colleges," Diss. Florida State Univ., 1970, pp. 4, 50.

<sup>2</sup>Frank C. Adams, Roland Keene, and John E. King, "New Philosophy--New Profession," in Money, Marbles or Chalk? Student Financial Support in Higher Education, eds. Adams, Keene, and King, p. 310.

<sup>3</sup>Alden, p. 1; North, Advance Financial Planning, p. 88.

the reality base the institution must establish. One of the most important qualities of the admissions officer will be the ability to explain and encourage participation by faculty in the admissions process. The role of marketing in the admissions process will continue to increase, demanding an understanding of marketing concepts.<sup>1</sup>

Johnson stressed some specific skills and roles for admissions officers in the future: assertive leadership, strong analytical skills, managers of people, policy, programs and priorities, and consultants for change, "mirroring the institution."<sup>2</sup> Skills of strategic planning will also be important within the institutions' overall planning process. With 50 to 90 percent of a private institution's income dependent on student revenue, the pressure is on admissions directors to expand their skills and responsibilities within their institutions.<sup>3</sup>

The expansion of the role of the federal government affects admissions practices, but probably has a greater

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<sup>2</sup>John C. Hoy, "Marketing Perspectives and Institutional Admissions Office Pressures for Meeting Enrollments," Colloquium on Marketing, Student Admissions and the Public Interest, Racine, WI, 7 Nov. 1979; John M. Duggan, "A Role for Marketing in College Admissions," Colloquium on College Admissions, Fontana, WI, 16 May 1976, p. xi.

<sup>3</sup>Dennis L. Johnson, "Managing Change in Admissions," NACAC Journal, 17 (Jan. 1973), 13-16.

<sup>1</sup>Johnson, pp. 13-16; Richard R. Perry, "New Directions for the College Admissions Officer," College and University, 56 (Spring 1981), 233-45.

impact on financial aid offices. The financial aid office was created originally in response to an increase in federal involvement; its future, then, may rest in the hands of such external forces. It would strongly benefit a financial aid officer, and the institution, to be informed and aware of proposed changes in federal policy.<sup>1</sup>

The Placement of Admissions and Financial  
Aid Within an Institution's  
Organizational Structure

The importance of the roles of admissions and financial aid officers is directly related to their placement within the administrative hierarchy of an institution. Much has been written about both admissions and financial aid, and their perceived power within an organization's administrative team.

In any discussion of organizational structure, it is helpful to remember that the organization for administration is nothing more than the "instruments employed to assist and provide leadership in an institution in the accomplishment of the purposes of the organization."<sup>2</sup> One of the most

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<sup>1</sup>Clyde Vroman, "Problems and Issues Confronting the Admissions Community," Colloquium on College Admissions Policies, Interlochen, MI, 1967, pp. 6-7; James F. Barry, "Study of the Role of the Director of Financial Aid in his Own Institution in Selected Colleges and Universities in the Midwest," Diss. Loyola Univ., Chicago, 1974, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>Philip A. Tripp, "Organization for Student Personnel Administration," in Handbook of College and University Administration, ed. Knowles, pp. 7-9.

critical considerations, therefore, when placing any administrative unit within the organizational structure, is the contribution of that unit to the central purpose and goal of the organization. With regard to admissions and financial aid, DeJarnett specified that the goals of the aid operation must coincide with the mission of its institution and the program organized to serve the students who are its clientele.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the admissions operation is responsible for the most important resource necessary for sustaining and improving the academic climate of an institution.<sup>2</sup>

Given the relative importance of both admissions and financial aid, one might conclude that the organizational structure of these offices would be consistent across institutions. However, just the opposite is true. A number of different administrative alignments have existed among institutions, with admissions and financial aid reporting to a number of different individuals within different divisions.

Perry's study in 1962-63 included 418 admissions officers in the American Association of Collegiate

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond P. DeJarnett, "The Organization of Student Support Programs in Institutions of Higher Learning," in Money, Marbles or Chalk? Student Financial Support in Higher Education, eds. Adams, Keene, and King, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup>Richard R. Perry, "The Office of Admissions--Role of the Administrator," in Handbook of College and University Administration, ed. Knowles, pp. 3-99.

Registrars and Admissions Officers, and the Association of College Admissions Counselors. He found that 50 percent of the admissions officers reported directly to the president of their institution, with 48 percent reporting to a vice president. This research also discovered, however, that only 18.8 percent of the admissions officers served on the executive cabinet of the president.<sup>1</sup>

Studies of financial aid officers have shown similar differences in their reporting structures. Puryear's research found that the supervisor of the aid director tended to be either the president or the dean of students of the institution. These two positions accounted for 71 percent of the supervisors of financial aid directors.<sup>2</sup>

Relationships have also been found between an institution's size and the placement of the financial aid director in the organization. Barry found that the smaller the institution, the higher the aid director was in the administrative structure. Specifically, in institutions with fewer than 5,000 students, the financial aid director typically reported to the president or to an individual once removed from the chief administrative official. Barry also found the aid directors in private institutions closer to the president than their counterparts at public

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<sup>1</sup>Perry, The Admissions Officer--Educator, Administrator, or Professional?, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup>Puryear, p. 50.

institutions. In analyzing the specifics of the direct superior of the aid officer, Barry found seven different individuals identified by his sample of 170 financial aid directors. These included the Dean of Students, Vice President for Student Affairs, President, Business Manager, Admissions Director, Dean of Student Affairs and Academic Dean.<sup>1</sup>

The Nash report in 1968 found that 16 percent of full-time directors reported to the president while 49 percent reported to a dean and 35 percent to another administrative officer.<sup>2</sup> A later study surveyed both presidents and aid directors to determine their perceptions of the aid directors' influence in the institution. The results of this study concluded that all influential aid officers were within two steps of the president of the institution. Nine out of thirty-three directors reported directly to the president, with the average distance away from the president being 1.75 steps. This research concluded that the aid officers possessing the greatest influence were those who had direct access to the president.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Barry, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup>Louis C. Stamatakos and James R. Bekkering, "Financial Aid: Whom Should It Serve?," Journal of College Student Personnel, 13 (Jan. 1972), 61-64.

<sup>3</sup>Josephine L. Ferguson, "College Presidents and Financial Aid Officers," The College Board Review, 121 (Fall 1981), 2-7, 24.

The perceived power structure in institutions of higher education is an important variable when considering placement of administrative offices. A study conducted in 1964 and replicated in 1971 surveyed faculty and administrators at sixty-eight universities regarding their perceptions of the power structure in their institutions. The results of this study concluded that the president and vice presidents possessed the greatest amount of power.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, administrators, recognizing their value to the institution and desiring a voice in the decision-making process, prefer a direct connection to the individuals with the greatest power in the organization.

The appropriate organization of admissions and financial aid within an institution requires a determination of the appropriate division with which it should be aligned. The two most common placements occur within the academic division and the division of student personnel administration. One survey of eighty-six admissions directors found that 50 percent were part of academic administration while 25 percent reported association with student personnel.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Gross and Paul V. Grambsch, Changes in University Organization, 1964-71 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>George D. Kuh, "Admissions," in College Student Personnel Services, ed. William T. Packwood (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1977), p. 10.



The admissions office is in a very unique situation in that it really has two channels of authority to which it must report and remain accountable. The first is the faculty of the institution, who set academic standards and represent the authority behind admissions policy. The second channel of authority is the formal administrative structure of the institution. Obviously, different institutions have chosen to whom admissions will report based on their respective structural and administrative needs.<sup>1</sup>

A 1981 National Enrollment Survey indicated that half of the United States colleges and universities experienced administrative reorganization since 1976. Specifically, one-third of the admissions officers responded that they reported to a different office than they did five years earlier! The majority of the shift represented a move away from the academic affairs area and toward direct reporting lines to the president of the university or the vice president for student affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Many arguments have been made in support of the financial aid operation within the student personnel

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<sup>1</sup>Perry, "The Office of Admissions--Role of the Administrator," pp. 3-10, 102.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Kemerer, J. Victor Baldridge, and Kenneth Green, Strategies for Effective Enrollment Management (Washington, D.C.: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1982), p. 42.

division. Initially, institutions considered financial assistance a clerical responsibility, but have since recognized its important contribution to institutional effectiveness.<sup>1</sup> Since its inception, the financial aid profession has considered counseling a major component of its responsibilities. "Financial counseling should be integrated with the total counseling process contributing to the adjustment of the individual student."<sup>2</sup>

This fundamental philosophy underlines the support for financial aid within the student personnel division. Student financial problems may be correlated with academic difficulties, emotional disturbances or physical disorders. A financial aid office closely associated with other student personnel operations can better serve the students' total needs.<sup>3</sup>

Financial aid also serves a basic educational function in the institution. All financial aid programs (loans, scholarships, employment) stem from work and productivity. Furthermore, all programs of financial assistance can provide worthwhile educational experiences for student recipients.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John W. Lavery, "Financial Aids: Everyone's Business," NASPA Journal, 4 (July 1966), 8.

<sup>2</sup>Babbidge, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Adams, Keene, and King, p. 311.

Several institutions have placed both admissions and financial aid within the student personnel division. Admissions directors often perceive their roles to be much closer to administration than to faculty and feel more comfortable when associated with student personnel. Studies have also shown that admissions personnel are highly regarded when compared to other student personnel administrators, but do not fare as well with academicians.<sup>1</sup>

The appropriate role of admissions and financial aid within an institution of higher education is one best decided by individual institutions. The critical issue becomes the significance, respect and power these offices receive within the organizations they serve. Hooten found that admissions operations exerted very little influence in charting the course of the institution.<sup>2</sup> Results such as these cause great concern among professionals yearning to contribute great things to their institutions.

Several authors have noted the past importance of financial aid and admissions, and recognized their increasing significance in the future. Both admissions and

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<sup>1</sup>Frank A. Bucci, "How Important are Registrars and Admissions Officers?" College and University, 46 (Spring 1971), 191-98; Hauser and Lazarsfeld; Harry Gibson and James E. Thomas, "Doing Your Own Thing--A Study of Offices of Admissions and Records," College and University, 46 (Winter 1971), 139-47.

<sup>2</sup>David E. Hooten, "The Admissions Function in Public, Urban Colleges and Universities," Dissertation Abstracts International, 32 (1971), 199A (Indiana University).

financial aid play a critical role in shaping the nature of a student body of an institution. They also represent the institution to external publics: prospective students, parents, high school counselors and alumni. Aid officers can also contribute valuable information to administrators establishing fiscal plans for the institution. Many points have been made in support of placing admissions and financial aid at the center of the educational process. These are the offices that bear full responsibility for the admission and financial encouragement of high quality, successful students. There seems to be no limit to the contribution admissions and financial aid can make to the educational development of individual students and the institution.<sup>1</sup> The organizational placement of these offices, therefore, must receive serious consideration to allow for maximum contributions.

#### Administration and Management

Before considering the specific administrative issues within the management of admissions and financial aid, a few concepts will be discussed concerning the organization of higher education in general. This discussion will provide a context in which the admissions/financial aid issues may be better understood.

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<sup>1</sup>Alden, p. 5; North, "Advance Financial Planning," p. 88; Lenn, p. 13.

### Higher Education Organizational Characteristics

Educational institutions have long been compared to other organizations with regard to organizational structure, operation and administration. Colleges and universities are unique organizations, differing in major fundamental characteristics from business firms, industrial organizations and government agencies.<sup>1</sup>

Some basic characteristics distinguish college and university organizations from other complex organizations. Goal ambiguity is common in academic organizations. Colleges and universities often have vague, ambiguous, lofty goals that are difficult to measure. Academic organizations are also client-serving institutions. Unlike business organizations, success cannot be measured only by the bottom-line figure at the conclusion of a fiscal year. Rather, colleges and universities are in the "people-processing" business, with inputs and outputs a little more difficult to specify.<sup>2</sup>

Academic environments are also characterized by a high degree of participation from professionals. Professional

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<sup>1</sup>J. Victor Baldridge, "Organizational Characteristics of Colleges and Universities," in The Dynamics of Organizational Change in Education, eds. J. Victor Baldridge and Terrence E. Deal (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, 1983), p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Baldridge, p. 40.

employees create a distinct environment of their own, demanding work autonomy, peer evaluation, and possession of an intense loyalty to their profession rather than to the organization. Consequently, many conflicts result between professional employees and the bureaucratic administrators. A definite conflict of interest emerges, disrupting the traditional operation of the organization.<sup>1</sup>

Karl Weick has confronted this unique structure of higher education, describing it as a "loosely-coupled system." Rather than being tightly controlled by rule and command, loosely-coupled organizations are made up of loosely-connected, responsive units, which share activities and responsibilities, but remain independent and autonomous in their identity. While Weick's concept of loosely-coupled systems includes several complex factors, for the purpose of this discussion, it is enough to simply state that this approach does provide a theoretical framework for educational organizations and helps professionals gain a better understanding of the institutions for whom they work and their methods of operation.<sup>2</sup>

Baldrige provides another explanation of the nature of the educational institution. His political model of university governance stresses the natural presence of

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<sup>1</sup>Baldrige, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Weick, "Educational Organizations as Loosely-Coupled Systems," in The Dynamics of Organizational Change in Education, eds. Baldrige and Deal, pp. 16-18.

conflict and the existence of several power blocs within the organization. A democratic tendency still exists in the institution with formal authority severely limited by political pressure and bargaining groups. The political model is further characterized by increasing amounts of influence exerted from external groups.<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of the model or theory accepted, one concept of higher education organizations remains: change. People, policies, structures and purposes of organizations are always changing. The source of change may vary, from internal to external, but the presence of change is a fundamental characteristic of academic institutions.<sup>2</sup>

A study of an institution's environment can help explain the resulting learning and development which takes place. Students on different campuses will encounter different settings, which will influence their overall experience and behavior. College students differ, as well as college environments. Pace and Stern's concept of "press" helps one analyze the environment in terms of

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<sup>1</sup>J. Victor Baldridge, Academic Governance (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, 1971), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>J. Victor Baldridge and Terrence E. Deal, "The Basics of Change in Educational Organizations," in The Dynamics of Organizational Change in Education, eds. Baldridge and Deal, pp. 1-2.

stimulus, treatment and process.<sup>1</sup> Students do have time to form accurate, durable impressions of an educational setting's milieu; educational settings can and do make a difference in students' lives.<sup>2</sup>

### The Management of Admissions and Financial Aid

The best administrative organization is the one designed to meet the needs of the students for whom our universities and colleges exist. It is the responsibility of administration to give maximum service in that direction at minimum cost.<sup>3</sup>

The organization and management of admissions and financial aid offices has been driven by this goal of maximum service to students. Professional administrators demonstrate concern for student satisfaction and aim to please the consumers of their services. Different administrators, however, have expressed different ideas with regard to the most effective method of managing admissions and financial aid offices.

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<sup>1</sup>C. Robert Pace and George C. Stern, "An Approach to the Measurement of Psychological Characteristics of College Environments," in Issues in Social Ecology--Human Milieus, eds. Rudolf H. Moos and Paul M. Insel (Palo Alto, CA: National Press, 1974), p. 417.

<sup>2</sup>Rudolf H. Moos, Evaluating Educational Environments (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Elwood C. Kastner, "The Registrar and Director of Admissions," in Administrators in Higher Education: Their Functions and Coordination, ed. G. P. Burns (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 187.



Many researchers have acknowledged the significance of healthy communication lines between an institution's admissions and financial aid offices. Communication between these two offices has been described as so critically important that it is generally desirable to join the two functions. Coordination of distributed literature, notification of aid awards to prospective students, and the overall planning of an institution's enrollment strategy have all been cited as significant factors contributing to the need for a solid working relationship between admissions and financial aid offices.<sup>1</sup>

Several authors have examined the separate management issues within admissions and financial aid offices. Financial aid office management has been described as compelling, vital and energetic. Directing an office of financial aid is complex and challenging, and describing the management of the office is equally as difficult.<sup>2</sup> Cooper's research examined the institutional administration of need-based programs. He concluded that most aid offices displayed a lack of standardization of administrative practices and recommended that financial aid directors aim

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<sup>1</sup>Babbidge, p. 34; "Activities and Responsibilities of the Financial Aid Office," in Management of Student Aid (Washington, D.C.: National Association of College and University Business Officers, 1979), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>John J. O'Hearne, "Financial Aid Office Management," Journal of Student Financial Aid, 3, No. 2 (June 1973), 27-33.

to develop standards for administration.<sup>1</sup> Another descriptive survey of financial aid offices in the state of West Virginia showed substantial levels of inadequate staffing and recommended the establishment of a professional training program, as well as an improvement in supervision and administration of federal financial aid programs.<sup>2</sup>

The management and direction of financial aid programs has been further complicated by additional requirements mandated by the federal government. The aid officer essentially has two bosses: the institution with which it is associated and the public that provides the money for the students. Conflict is inherent within an office which reports to both an academic institution and a national public interest.<sup>3</sup>

Financial aid administrators were criticized, in the early days of their profession, for their lack of direction and mission. Too often, aid officers appeared to be more

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<sup>1</sup>Harlan Terry Cooper, "Diversity in College and University Administration of Federal Student Financial Aid," Dissertation Abstracts International, 40 (1979), 693A (Stanford University).

<sup>2</sup>Woodrow Wilson Hartstock, "A Descriptive Survey of Financial Aid Offices and Their Operation in Institutions of Higher Education in West Virginia," Dissertation Abstracts International, 36 (1975), 636-37A (West Virginia University).

<sup>3</sup>Francis Keppel, "NACAC's Town Meeting--The Nation's Financial Aid Agenda," Journal of College Admissions, 102 (Winter 1984), 20.

concerned with institutional maintenance and growth, ignoring the needs of students. The overriding impression existed that students got lost somewhere between institutional self-interest and ineffectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

The art of managing a financial aid office has not made great strides even in more recent years. Decreasing funding levels are causing administrators to reassess the management of student aid dollars, as aid administration receives increased attention. Financial aid offices have seldom been well-managed, but six major characteristics of exemplary financial aid offices have been defined: (1) strong institutional commitment, (2) preventive quality control, (3) strict guidelines for satisfactory academic progress, (4) statements of independent status, (5) written procedures, and (6) high degrees of professionalism within staff.<sup>2</sup> The rising costs of a college education and the increasing role of cost in college attendance make the effective management of financial aid offices all the more important in institutions of higher education.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley J. Gross, "A Critique of Practice in the Administration of Financial Aid," Journal of College Student Personnel, 7 (March 1966), 80, 84.

<sup>2</sup>Ronald Sepanik and Edward P. St. John, "A Framework for Improving the Management of Financial Aid Offices," in New Directions for Higher Education: Meeting Student Aid Needs in a Period of Retrenchment, ed. Martin Kramer (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982), pp. 65-66.

<sup>3</sup>Dean Whitla, "The Admissions Equation," Change, 16 (Nov./Dec. 1984), 25-26.

The administration of admissions operations has been no less scrutinized than financial aid practices. Several researchers have analyzed types of recruitment practices and impacts on college choice.<sup>1</sup> One study even concluded that no significant relationship existed between the management style of an admissions office and its success in recruiting and enrolling students.<sup>2</sup> An analysis of one eight-campus state university system found that different admissions organizational systems existed on different campuses, and concluded that administrative structure did not seem as important as the ability of supervisory officials to designate appropriate priority to the admissions operation.<sup>3</sup>

The process of admissions has been described as more of an art than a science. As the competition for a declining pool of applicants increases, the administration of admissions offices will undoubtedly demand a mastering of the art.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kela O. Adams, "Admissions, Recruiting and Marketing Throughout the Indiana University System," Dissertation Abstracts International, 41 (1980), 3438A (Indiana University); William Lynn Campbell, "A Comparison of Recruitment Practices in Private Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities," Dissertation Abstracts International, 33 (1972), 1456A (George Peabody College for Teachers).

<sup>2</sup>John G. Conaway, "Does Your Management Style Make a Difference?" Journal of College Admissions, 27, No. 2 (Oct. 1982), 8-11.

<sup>3</sup>Adams, "Admissions, Recruiting and Marketing Throughout the Indiana University System," p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Dean R. Baldwin, "Open Forum," Journal of College Admissions, 101 (Fall 1983), 38.

### The Relationship Between Admissions and Financial Aid

While much attention has been focused on the separate management of admissions and financial aid offices, an increasing amount of the literature has called for a very close working relationship between these two offices. Shared responsibilities between admissions and financial aid officers have been advocated by several authors. Hage recommended that financial aid officers engage in at least two weeks of admissions recruiting each year.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, admissions representatives have the responsibility to understand aid availability, needs analysis and current changes in aid administration. Without this shared knowledge, admissions counselors fail to accurately and effectively represent their institution.<sup>2</sup>

A number of studies have examined the relationship between admissions and financial aid offices. Masoner concluded that inadequate, poor record keeping was predominant in both offices and called for an intensive

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<sup>1</sup>Robert K. Hage, "How Well is Your Financial Aid Office Being Run?" The College Board Review, 89 (Fall 1973), 14.

<sup>2</sup>E. Eugene Oliver, "Implementing Admissions Policy," in Admissions, Academic Records and Registrar Services, ed. C. James Quann and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980), p. 104; G. Gary Ripple, "College Admissions: From Problems to Priorities," The College Board Review, 112 (Summer 1979), 4-5.

study of all facets of admissions and financial aid.<sup>1</sup> Sullivan and Litten stressed the importance of the impact of financial aid when studying the admissions yield of an institution.<sup>2</sup> Seventy percent of the 849 institutions responding to Nash and Lazarfeld's 1968 study reported a fairly close coordination of admissions and financial aid functions.<sup>3</sup> The importance of the relationship between these two offices was stressed at a 1980 conference of the national meeting of admissions officers and registrars. Several presentations were made regarding financial aid procedures and the latest developments in federal aid regulations.<sup>4</sup>

North cited some disadvantages of a close working relationship between admissions and financial aid offices.

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<sup>1</sup>David J. Masoner, "College Admissions: A Study of Recent Changes and the Factors Which Influenced these Changes," Dissertation Abstracts International, 32 (1972), 4377A (University of Pittsburgh).

<sup>2</sup>Larry H. Litten and Daniel F. Sullivan, "Using Research in Analyzing Student Markets: A Case Study," Colloquium on College Admissions, Fontana, WI, 16 May 1976, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup>George Nash and Paul Lazarfeld, "New Administrator on Campus: A Study of the Director of Financial Aid," (New York: Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research, 1968), cited by Michael Dannells, "Financial Aid," in College Student Personnel Services, ed. Packwood, p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>"Proceedings of 66th Annual Meeting of American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, 20 April 1980," College and University, 55 (Summer 1980), 342-43.

The increased emphasis on financial aid seems to have dominated recruitment activities. Student aid, when mentioned in the same breath with admissions, implies a solution to the recruitment, enrollment and retention problems of colleges and universities. North further argued that aid officers have progressed further toward professionalization and professional standards than admissions personnel, who have been around much longer. Student aid is apparently ineffective as a recruitment tool in that it cannot initially entice a prospective student.<sup>1</sup>

While disagreements along the continuum exist, more arguments have been made in support of close collaboration between admissions and financial aid offices. The lack of finances often represents a barrier to college attendance and many students' decisions to attend an institution are based on the amount of aid available.<sup>2</sup> Many students fail to pursue enrollment at an institution because either the aid office was in an obscure location and no one provided assistance, or institutional personnel failed to provide

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<sup>1</sup>Walter M. North, "The Role of the Aid Officer in the Institution," in Money, Marbles or Chalk? Student Financial Support in Higher Education, eds. Adams, Keene, and King, pp. 270-72.

<sup>2</sup>Leonard M. Wenc, "The Role of Financial Aid in Attrition and Retention," The College Board Review, 104 (Summer 1977), 17-21.

adequate advice or direction regarding aid availability.<sup>1</sup>

The results of a unified effort between admissions and financial aid pay off great dividends to both the student and the institution. Both parties are aided in the achievement of their ultimate goal: matching the right students with the appropriate institution.<sup>2</sup> The merger of one institution's admissions and financial aid offices resulted in a changing composition of the student body and an alteration of the institutional mission.<sup>3</sup> Improved cooperation between these two offices ultimately benefits the student in utilizing all available resources.<sup>4</sup> The institution that operates a unified aid office closely related to the admissions office develops a group of institutional spokespersons on all matters concerned with student recruitment. The institution begins to speak with one voice and something approaching professional standards

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<sup>1</sup>Victor P. Meskell and Wesley Sheffield, "First Aid for Recruiting--Financial Aid," National ACAC Journal, 18 (Nov. 1973), 13-15.

<sup>2</sup>Baldwin, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>Calvin Newton Mosley, "The Impact of the Merger of the Offices of Admissions and Financial Aids at Harvard and Radcliffe Colleges," Dissertation Abstracts International, 42 (1981), 2413-14A (Harvard University).

<sup>4</sup>Sara Arthur, "Should the Admissions Office Do It Alone?" National ACAC Journal, 20 (July 1975), 30-31.



begins to emerge.<sup>1</sup>

Enrollment projections for the 1990's represent a dismal forecast. Continued existence of colleges and universities will depend on their ability to recognize and respond to challenges within the environment. Future success in college admissions and recruiting will greatly depend on financial assistance programs, and the sooner institutions respond to this relationship, the more confident they will be about their survival.<sup>2</sup>

#### Enrollment Management: An Emerging Concept

The first appearance of the term "enrollment management" is not clear. It has appeared in higher education literature since the beginning of the enrollment crisis of the early 1980's. Enrollment management has been defined in several ways by several different individuals. One definition describes enrollment management as:

an institutionally-based process that brings together often disparate functions having to do with recruiting, funding, tracking, retaining and

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Howe, Jr., "Centralizing Student Aid Activities," in Student Financial Aid and Institutional Purpose, ed. College Entrance Examination Board, pp. 54-55.

<sup>2</sup>William F. Elliott, "Management of Admissions and Financial Aid: The Net Tuition Income Concept," Dissertation Abstracts International, 35 (1974), 7677A (University of Pittsburgh).

replacing students as they move toward, within and away from an institution of higher education.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, Hossler has defined enrollment management as:

an activity that influences the size, the shape, and the characteristics of a student body by directing institutional efforts in marketing, recruitment and admissions as well as pricing and financial aid.<sup>2</sup>

The process of enrollment management has been even further defined as both a "concept" and a "procedure." As a concept, enrollment management implies an assertive approach to ensuring a steady supply of qualified students required to maintain institutional vitality. As a procedure, enrollment is a set of activities that helps institutions interact more successfully with their potential students.<sup>3</sup>

George Keller provided an alternative definition of enrollment management, referring to it as a re-awakened attention to that 75 percent of college outside the academic basics that contributes as much to student growth and satisfaction as the courses, formal teaching and majors.<sup>4</sup> Whatever definition one accepts, the managing of enrollments represents a systems approach, including traditional

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<sup>1</sup>"Proceedings of 66th Annual Meeting of American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers," p. 375.

<sup>2</sup>Hossler, Enrollment Management, An Integrated Approach, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Keller, "Enrollment Management: The Leadership Role," p. 6.

admissions operations as well as many other campus activities and services. Enrollment management is an administrative process, involving the entire campus.<sup>1</sup>

Campus-wide involvement in the recruitment and retention of students is not a totally new concept. Previous researchers have advocated faculty participation in the admissions process and the awarding of financial aid.<sup>2</sup> Dismal enrollment projections, however, have stimulated and encouraged this line of thinking, prompting the movement toward enrollment management.

While most campuses could benefit from an enrollment management concept, institutions identifying with the following "symptoms" should consider immediate implementation:

1. Recruitment efforts are disjointed and not managed by one office.
2. Advising programs do not work in cooperation with admissions and recruitment efforts.
3. The registration process is a nightmare.
4. The financial aid office cannot gain access to student academic information in a timely manner.
5. Staff development and new staff orientation programs are not geared toward student concerns.
6. Career planning and placement services are not routinely administered to new students.
7. Advertising programs and promotional materials are produced without involvement by the admissions office.

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<sup>1</sup>Hossler, "Managing Enrollment for Institutional Vitality," p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Meskill and Sheffield, p. 15.

8. Retention efforts are not organized to respond to social and academic problems.
9. Research is not routinely conducted on student perceptions of the institution and its services.<sup>1</sup>

Enrollment management centralizes functions within an institution that deal with student recruitment, retention, satisfaction and success. Specifically, it coordinates the responsibilities of recruitment, financial aid, admissions, registration, research, retention, career planning and placement and staff development as they all relate to student development. By joining these areas together under one administrative unit, an immediate system of accountability is established, critical to the nurturing of student enrollments.<sup>2</sup>

Organizing for enrollment management is not an easy task, and cannot be accomplished without the support and direction from the president and administration of an institution. Changes in administrative structure are often challenged by attitudes of territoriality. A supportive administration, along with extensively-trained personnel, can help minimize these problems and lead to more effective program delivery.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Will Chatham, "Enrollment Management: A Community College Approach," Leadership for Enrollment Management, Chicago, IL, 11 July 1985.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Audley W. Bridges, "Session Participants Discuss Enrollment Management Trends," NACAC Bulletin, Nov. 1984, p. 6.

The concept of enrollment management holds the promise of enabling institutions to exert more control over their enrollments.<sup>1</sup> Colleges and universities which have implemented the concept have reported great successes and improvements. One institution reported that, as a direct result of combined efforts through reorganization, the percentage of graduating freshmen rose from 54 percent to 62 percent.<sup>2</sup> Abuses and misuses of enrollment management have also occurred, however. Several campuses, reporting to be practicing enrollment management, have been found to be doing little more than "admissions management." These institutions were concentrating mainly on marketing and recruiting activities, excluding the other campus functions so crucial to the whole process. Enrollment management requires much more than simply re-naming an admissions office and re-titling its director.<sup>3</sup>

The role of financial aid within the enrollment management scheme is a vital one. Especially for private institutions, there is a great need to educate the public about the cost of higher education. Net tuition costs must be explained in publications and programs and understood by

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<sup>1</sup>Hossler, "Managing Enrollment for Institutional Vitality," p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Bridges, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Hossler, "Managing Enrollment for Institutional Vitality," p. 8.

university personnel. Student enrollment decisions are often delayed due to late notification of financial aid awards. Close communication between admissions and aid officers can help expedite the process while better serving the prospective student.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, financial aid strategies that optimize the institution's ability to attract and retain quality students are a crucial component of any total recruitment effort.<sup>2</sup>

### Marketing

The marketing component is a consistent theme running through the entire enrollment management concept. Constant referrals to student markets and admissions marketing indicate a strong interrelationship between enrollment management and marketing within higher education. The first responsibility of enrollment managers, as outlined by Hossler, is:

Student marketing and recruitment:  
enrollment managers must have data that enable  
them to identify current and potential markets.

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<sup>1</sup>Van de Ven.

<sup>2</sup>"Proceedings of 66th Annual Meeting of American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers," p. 376.

They must communicate to inform, motivate, and service these markets. The ultimate goal is to recruit matriculants who will find attendance at the institution satisfying, stimulating, and growth-producing.<sup>1</sup>

Marketing within higher education has been met with mixed reactions and has often been misunderstood. Some traditional faculty and administrators view marketing as presenting too much of a sales approach, cheapening the institution and likening it more with the profit-driven business sector. Marketing within higher education, however, is significantly different from marketing within the industrial world. Program development in higher education is a decentralized departmental function unlike its counterpart in private industry. Consequently, program development, while important to successful enrollment management, is not considered a marketing task in the world of higher education. Furthermore, colleges and universities take a more active role with their markets. Unlike the corporate sector, institutions of higher education traditionally have not altered their overall mission and related offerings to satisfy the demands of an ever-changing marketplace. Philosophical goals provide a foundation for institutions that preclude temporary market trends.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hossler, Enrollment Management, An Integrated Approach, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green, p. 67.

The concept of marketing in higher education provides a means by which management can assess the degree to which the mission of the institution is in harmony with market interests.<sup>1</sup> Within colleges and universities, the marketing process is the set and sequence of activities, under the control of the institution, that affects the size, quality and preferences of its applicant pool.<sup>2</sup>

Marketing in higher education is a comprehensive approach to conception and implementation. At its best, marketing analyzes student markets in depth, defines those markets, takes initiative to respond to expressed demand and develops an offer based on the right program, the right financial aid package, at the right place and time.<sup>3</sup> The market actually has two sides to it: those who buy and those who sell; those who seek education and those who provide it. The process of joining these two sides together is an interaction of two basic processes: the student's search for college and the college's search for students.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ihlanfeldt, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Philip Kotler, "Applying Marketing Theory to College Admissions," Colloquium on College Admissions, Fontana, WI, 16 May 1976, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Huddleston, Jr., "In Consideration of Marketing and Reorganization," National ACAC Journal, 25 (July 1980), 18-24.

<sup>4</sup>David L. Brodigan, Larry H. Litten and Daniel Sullivan, Applying Market Research in College Admissions (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1983), p. 28.



When considering marketing within higher education, three basic concepts must be mentioned: service, involvement and openness. First, higher education is a service industry, probably the largest of its kind in the world. Consequently, faculty and administrators must acknowledge their obligation to meet the expectations of prospective students. Failing to do so decreases the credibility of all of higher education.<sup>1</sup>

The second concept of involvement is vital to any successful marketing program. Admissions personnel are not the only representatives of an institution; faculty, alumni and students can all be valuable contributors to the recruiting program and should be included in the process.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, openness is paramount to the concept of involvement. With increasing numbers of people involved in the admissions operation, admissions personnel must aid in informing them with accurate, direct and timely information. A philosophy of openness and involvement will serve to increase an institution's impact both externally and internally.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William Ihlanfeldt, "A Management Approach to the Buyer's Market," Liberal Education, 61, No. 2 (May 1975), 133-48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ihlanfeldt, "A Management Approach to the Buyer's Market," pp. 133-48.

The marketing concept, as understood within higher education and enrollment management theory, is a university-wide consumer orientation with an objective of achieving long-term goals. It is important that everyone within an institution understands and believes that the consumer is important and it is their job to see that student needs are being met. Enrollment management means that a university needs the ability to have greater control over its environment. It means there is a need to effectively manage enrollment, not have the enrollment manage the university.<sup>1</sup>

#### Models of Organization

The philosophy behind enrollment management is sound, causing little dispute among professionals regarding its logic and conceptual framework. The difficulty arises, however, in applying the theory to practical institutional settings. The unique nature of higher educational organizations, characterized as loosely-coupled political systems with ambiguous goals, makes it difficult to establish a simple structure for implementing enrollment management. Kreutner and Godfrey stressed, however, that an effective enrollment management program minimally required three conditions: (1) an institutional commitment to the

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<sup>2</sup>Tom Snider, "A Short Step for Directors of Admissions: A Giant Step for Enrollment Management, Part II," Leadership for Enrollment Management, Chicago, IL, 11 July 1985.

concept, (2) a realignment of functions central to both the concept and process, and (3) assignment of responsibility for managing the system.<sup>1</sup>

Proposed organizational structures have addressed the latter two conditions of realignment and responsibility. First, the organization of the offices of admissions and financial aid received specific attention, with the focus on integrating financial aid into the planning, budgeting and evaluation processes of the institution. Such integration requires that the financial aid office maintain a mutual cooperative relationship with the business office of the institution as well as direct working relationships with faculty, development officers and admissions personnel.<sup>2</sup>

The role of the admissions office within the enrollment management organization is crucial to the success of the entire operation. Ihlanfeldt proposed creating an environment in which the admissions director really functions as a marketing director. Too often, day-to-day routines and demands preoccupy an admissions director's time, drawing attention away from the vital marketing responsibilities desperately needed within institutions. Ihlanfeldt suggested removing the admissions director from

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<sup>1</sup>Eric S. Godfrey and Leonard Kreutner, "Enrollment Management--A New Vehicle for Institutional Renewal," The College Board Review, 118 (Winter 1980-81), 6-9, 29.

<sup>2</sup>"Activities and Responsibilities of the Financial Aid Office," p. 122.

those daily tasks by delegating them to an associate director, thus freeing the director to become more involved in marketing research and planning. The objective of such a structure would be to create an environment which allows the "free flow of ideas within the admissions office and between the admissions staff and audiences external to the admissions office."<sup>1</sup>

The total structure of an enrollment management concept includes much more than admissions and financial aid. Hossler specifies eight services which have direct relationship to an enrollment management concept: student marketing and recruitment, pricing and financial aid, academic and career advising, academic assistance programs, institutional research, orientation, retention and student services. Enrollment management involves the entire campus.<sup>2</sup>

The actual organization and administrative alignment of these services remains as a challenge to enrollment managers. Different campuses will have different dynamics affecting the structural divisions. However, ultimate responsibility for organization must be implemented by someone.

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<sup>1</sup>Ihlanfeldt, Achieving Optimal Enrollments and Tuition Revenues, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>Hossler, Enrollment Management, An Integrated Approach, pp. 6-7.

Huddleston suggested an organizational structure in which seven specific offices (admissions, financial aid, orientation, advisement, retention, cooperative education and placement) report directly to an assistant to the vice president for academic affairs. This specific structure is designed to define and support students' needs and continually examine the needs of both internal and external publics.<sup>1</sup>

Administrators at California State University, Long Beach, took a different approach to structuring enrollment management on their campus. The responsibility for implementing the concept did not lie with one individual, or with even one division, but with three major units. A collaborative relationship was established among the divisions of academic affairs, student affairs and administrative affairs. The actual operations for enrollment management were divided into four enrollment management modules: marketing services, enrollment services, retention services and research services. Activities within each module were grouped based on their impact on some stage of the enrollment management cycle, not according to bureaucratic structure in the university. The modules represent a linear system with a continual feedback loop where activities in one module naturally lead to

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<sup>1</sup>Huddleston, pp. 19, 23.

activities in the next module. The success of this model has been attributed to the maintenance of a very strict, closed system, one in which any artificial break would serve to eliminate its effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

Officials at California State, Long Beach, view enrollment management as a concept, a process and an outcome. As a concept, enrollment management maintains a central theme that an institution can control its destiny. As a process, enrollment management logically integrates traditionally independent functions related to marketing, admissions, funding and retention. As an outcome, enrollment management affords the institution "valuable predictive capability," enabling it to better utilize resources and manage either growth, maintenance or decline.<sup>2</sup>

Kemerer, Baldrige and Green described four different administrative approaches to developing an enrollment management system. First, the creation of an enrollment management committee, charged with the responsibility of examining student markets, the campus environment, academic programs and services. While often serving as an effective first step, the committee approach rarely exerts a great deal of influence.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Godfrey and Kreutner, pp. 7-9, 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Kemerer, Baldrige, and Green, p. 29.

The second approach involves a staff coordinator, responsible for managing the numerous functions within the enrollment management system. The weakness of this approach lies with the lack of power and authority possessed by the staff coordinator.<sup>1</sup>

Another approach, known as the matrix system, organizes enrollment management activities into four distinct elements (marketing, enrollment services, retention and research), with one senior-level administrator directing all activities. This model (the theoretical foundation applied at California State, Long Beach), while often effective, can quickly be weakened by a senior-level administrator committed to several other areas of the institution, failing to devote sufficient time to the enrollment management operation.<sup>2</sup>

Kemerer, Baldrige and Green emphasized the fourth and final approach: the creation of a distinct enrollment management division directed by a Vice President for Institutional Advancement, whose sole responsibility is the enrollment management unit. Before implementing such a structure, however, Kemerer and associates recommended close examination of an institution's organizational constraints. Not all institutions would be receptive to

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<sup>1</sup>Kemerer, Baldrige, and Green, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

such a division and individual institutional characteristics and politics must be considered.<sup>1</sup>

As enrollment management begins to emerge on several college campuses, a trend of progression through these four models has also emerged. Some institutions have started with an enrollment management committee and moved through the next three phases, ultimately creating a separate enrollment management division. Whatever the end result may be, organizers for enrollment management need to consider the characteristics, dynamics and personalities of their own campus, applying theoretical approaches within the realistic framework of their respective institutions.<sup>2</sup>

#### Student Participation

As previously mentioned, the professional literature on enrollment management focuses on organizational structure and the roles and reactions of professional administrators. Little, if any, effort has been made to examine students' attitudes and how they may be affected by different organizational structures. Several professionals in higher education have expressed concerns with the effect of too close a relationship between admissions and financial aid operations. An impression may be given that financial

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<sup>1</sup>Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Hossler, "Managing Enrollments for Institutional Vitality," p. 6.



aid is focused primarily on the entering student, with little attention or resources directed toward continuing students.<sup>1</sup>

Students have often cited the lack of information and poor communication channels as weaknesses in the college recruiting process. One student actually identified the critical relationship between admissions and financial aid, relating his frustration with the number of college recruiters who failed to discuss financial aid or seemed poorly prepared to explain the available aid programs.<sup>2</sup>

Students have also complained about the apparent lack of coordination between campus services. The admissions, financial aid, employment and academic advising offices have specifically been identified as services which students experience in a segmented fashion, receiving little assistance in integrating related information. Students' frustrations with financial aid offices specifically include long lines, lost files, personnel with hostile attitudes and lack of accessibility to decision-makers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>North, "The Role of the Aid Officer in the Institution," p. 273.

<sup>2</sup>Gary Ripple, "Students Show Good, Bad Points of Process," NACAC Bulletin, Nov.-Dec. 1983, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>CSS Student Advisory Committee, "What 250 Students Say About Financial Aid Problems," The College Board Review, 100 (Summer 1976), 15-25.

Some research involving student attitudes was conducted at the University of Oklahoma in the Fall of 1980. Students were surveyed regarding their views of the financial aid office as a student service, their knowledge of aid programs and suggestions for improving the service. The results of this survey proved that underclassmen (freshmen and sophomores) were more knowledgeable about financial aid services than upperclassmen. Recent efforts by the university to increase distribution of financial aid information to high schools may have been successful, but the lack of knowledge by upperclass students in this survey caused university officials to wonder if they had ignored the enrolled student.<sup>1</sup>

A marketing study done in 1976 analyzed the various marketing segments within higher education and the extent of influence of different parts of the recruiting program on prospective students. The findings concluded that current students enrolled at an institution were most influential in enrolling future students.<sup>2</sup>

Student attitudes and perspectives are valuable resources to college and university decision-makers.

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<sup>1</sup>Karen Pennell and Faron Hurst, "The Role of Financial Aid as a Student Service," Journal of Student Financial Aid, 12, No. 3 (Nov. 1982), 38-46.

<sup>2</sup>Bobby Alene Woods, "Application of a Marketing Model to a College Recruiting Program," Dissertation Abstracts International, 37 (1976), 2575A (University of Oklahoma).

Marketing insight begins at home: current students constitute a captive population that is inexpensive to study. An institution of higher education should not abandon lightly the performance of services to its current students.<sup>1</sup>

The organization of administrative units needs to be accomplished for the purpose of promoting emotional and intellectual development of students, not for the convenience and satisfaction of administrators and faculty.<sup>2</sup> For this purpose to be accomplished, university decision-makers need to know what students think about program services and quality. Successful market research, within an enrollment management plan, may require discovering what current and prospective students perceive to be important and the level of satisfaction they are experiencing.<sup>3</sup>

#### Summary

This review of literature was intended to provide a brief historical perspective of the admissions and financial aid professions, including the role of the professionals within those offices, the organizational structure and management of these operations. The admissions and

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<sup>1</sup>Brodigan, Litten, and Sullivan, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>Stamatakis and Bekkering, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>Huddleston, p. 19.

financial aid functions have grown together and apart, and are now evolving into a much larger enrollment management concept. The inclusion of student attitudes and opinions on enrollment management has been minimal, but this research study provides some information on student satisfaction levels with admissions and financial aid services, two vital operations within the enrollment management scheme. The admissions and financial aid areas represent the lifeline of an institution.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, student input into the organization and delivery of these services seems both necessary and appropriate.

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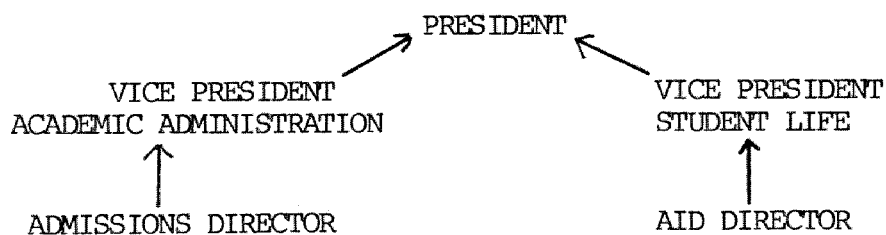
<sup>1</sup>Ihlanfeldt, Achieving Optimal Enrollments and Tuition Revenues, p. 174.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

The method of studying student satisfaction levels was a telephone survey of students from three institutions which have different organizational structures of admissions and financial aid offices. The three institutions are identified based on the following organizational patterns:

1. Admissions and financial aid organized within two separate administrative divisions, housed in separate facilities and reporting to two different vice presidents who have other responsibilities within the institution and report to the president of the institution (University A).<sup>1</sup>

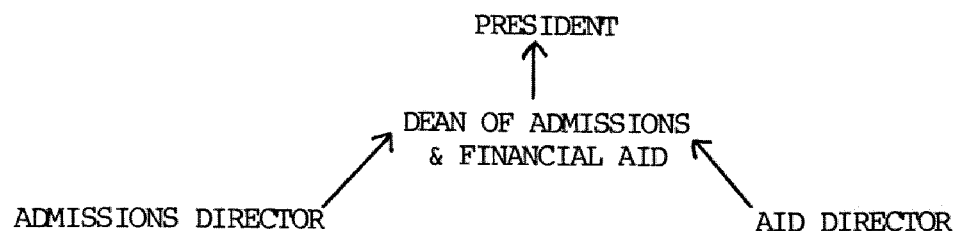


2. Admissions and financial aid organized in one facility with each program director reporting to a Dean of

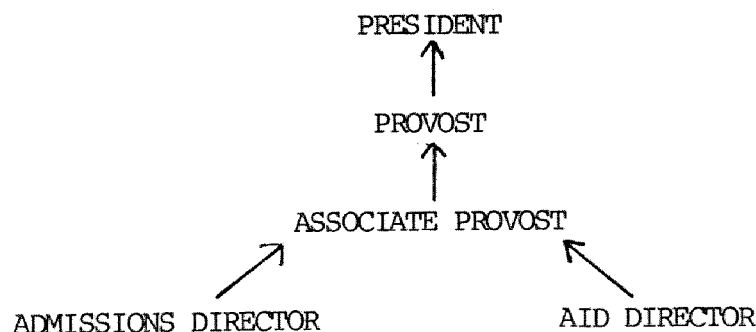
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<sup>1</sup>At the time of this study, University A combined the offices of admissions and financial aid under the administrative direction of the Vice President, Student Life. However, the students surveyed from this institution have had experiences with the separate organizational structure.

Admissions and Financial Aid, who has no other formal responsibilities beyond admissions and financial aid, and reports directly to the president (University B).



3. Admissions and financial aid organized under an enrollment management concept, with both offices operating in a common building and program directors reporting to an Associate Provost, who has other responsibilities within the institution and is twice removed from the president of the institution (University C).



### Population and Sample

The population considered for this study was undergraduate college students, with a sample of 120 students selected from the three previously identified institutions. The sample consisted of twenty freshmen and

twenty continuing students from each institution, determined through the use of a table of random numbers. A representative from each institution provided a randomly-selected list of forty freshmen and forty continuing students, from which the total sample was gathered.

### Instrumentation

An interview guide, developed for this study, was used to survey the students (see Appendix A). Approximately two weeks prior to the phone contact, a letter of introduction was sent to the students, informing them of the study and requesting their participation (see Appendix B). A pilot study was conducted with eight students to test the appropriateness of the survey and the letter. Suggested changes as a result of the pilot study were implemented, resulting in the final documents.

Students were then contacted, based on their inclusion on the lists provided. Initially, the first twenty students on each list were called. If these students could not be reached on the first attempt, a second attempt was made. If no contact was made at that time, the researcher went on to additional students on the list until a total of twenty freshmen and twenty continuing students were contacted.

### Research Design

This research compared the satisfaction levels of three student groups with admissions and financial aid services

within three different organizational structures. The researcher was interested in observing if differences in student satisfaction existed within different organizational patterns. The null hypothesis that no differences exist in student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services of different organizational structures was tested, in addition to the minor hypothesis that no differences in student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services existed between freshmen and continuing students.

#### Data Analysis

A three-way analysis of variance was applied to analyze the student responses. Analyses were done comparing student satisfaction with services (organizational comparisons), freshmen responses to continuing student responses (class comparison) and satisfaction with admissions/financial aid services to other campus services (service comparison). Responses to the final, open-ended question were categorized and presented in narrative form.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Research Findings

The telephone survey designed for this study was conducted from September through November, 1985. All phone contacts were made by the researcher, who personally called and interviewed the total sample of 120 students. An analysis of variance was done on each question to determine the differences in satisfaction levels among the three institutions, as well as between freshmen and continuing students. The results which follow represent the findings from this study.

#### Total Group Responses

Responses to the five questions concerning admissions and financial aid are presented in Table 1. The means listed represent the overall average student response to each of the five questions.

The highest level of satisfaction expressed by all students was with the atmosphere--the environment and friendliness--within the admissions and financial aid offices (represented by a score of 8.126). By contrast, the least satisfaction was found with the timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions (represented by a score of 7.462). (A more detailed table, providing specific

statistical information on each question, can be found in Appendix C.)

Table 1  
Responses of All Student Participants

Question	Overall Mean <sup>a</sup>	N
Ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately respond to questions	7.613	119
Timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions received	7.462	119
Availability of admissions and financial aid officers	7.630	119
Overall impression of the environment and friendliness of the admissions and financial aid offices	8.126	119
Satisfaction with admissions and financial aid offices compared to other institutions	8.078	116

<sup>a</sup>Range of possible responses: 0 (dissatisfied) to 10 (satisfied).

#### Institutional Responses

Responses to the same five questions, categorized by institution, are presented in Table 2. The organizational structures represented, again, are:

University A - Admissions and financial aid organized in separate divisions, with separate reporting lines and facilities.

University B - Admissions and financial aid organized in one facility, both reporting to a Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

University C - Admissions and financial aid organized as part of an enrollment management concept, within a common facility and reporting to an Associate Provost.

All three universities selected for this study were independent, four-year institutions with an enrollment ranging from 2,500 to 5,000 undergraduate students. All are located in a midwestern, urban setting, with annual expenses (tuition, room and board) ranging from \$8,000 to \$10,000.

Table 2  
Institutional Responses

Question	Univ. A (N)	Univ. B (N)	Univ. C (N)
Ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately respond to questions	6.97 (34)	7.77 (39)	8.05 (38)
Timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions received	7.47 (34)	7.08 (39)	7.84 (38)
Availability of admissions and financial aid officers	7.84 (38)	7.65 (40)	7.58 (38)
Overall impression of environment and friendliness of admissions and financial aid offices	8.47 (38)	7.93 (40)	8.08 (38)
Satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services as compared to other institutions	8.26 (38)	7.82 (40)	8.16 (38)
Total Average Satisfaction Levels	7.802	7.65	7.942

Both the highest and lowest satisfaction levels are represented by University A, with the least student satisfaction (6.97) expressed with admissions and financial aid officers' ability to respond to questions. The greatest amount of satisfaction, on the other hand (8.47) was felt by the same students, with the environment and friendliness in the admissions and financial aid offices. The average responses to these five questions, by institution, show that students at University C seem slightly more satisfied (7.942) than students at University A (7.802) or University B (7.65).

While there may appear to be some differences in responses between institutions, an analysis of variance showed no statistically significant differences, at the .05 level, in student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services of different organizational structures. (See Table 3.)

Therefore, the null hypothesis that there was no difference in student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services among different organizational structures was retained.

Table 3  
Institutional Analysis of Variance

Question	Univ. A (N)	Univ. B (N)	Univ. C (N)	Significance of F
Ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately respond to questions	6.97 (34)	7.77 (39)	8.05 (38)	.07
Timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions received	7.47 (34)	7.08 (39)	7.84 (38)	.298
Availability of admissions and financial aid officers	7.84 (38)	7.65 (40)	7.58 (38)	.816
Overall impression of environment and friendliness of admissions and financial aid offices	8.47 (38)	7.93 (40)	8.08 (38)	.159
Satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services as compared to other institutions	8.26 (38)	7.82 (40)	8.16 (38)	.451

#### Class Responses

The undergraduate student sample used for this study was further broken down into freshmen and continuing students. Table 4 compares the satisfaction levels of freshmen to continuing students with regard to the same five questions on admissions and financial aid.

On all questions, freshmen responded as being more satisfied than continuing students, with the greatest range of difference (0.91) appearing in the level of satisfaction

with admissions and financial aid officers' ability to answer questions (question number four). The greatest amount of satisfaction (8.56) was felt by freshmen with regard to the environment and friendliness in the admissions and financial aid offices. Continuing students responded with the lowest satisfaction (7.16) with the ability of admissions and financial aid officers to answer questions.

Table 4  
Class Responses

Question	Freshmen (N)	Cont. Stds. (N)	Difference Between Freshmen and Cont. Stds. Satisfaction
Ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately respond to questions	8.07 (56)	7.16 (55)	.91
Timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions received	7.55 (56)	7.36 (55)	.19
Availability of admissions and financial aid officers	7.8 (59)	7.58 (57)	.22
Overall impression of environment and friendli- ness of admissions and financial aid offices	8.56 (59)	7.74 (57)	.82
Satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services as compared to other institutions	8.46 (59)	7.68 (57)	.78

### Class Responses by Institution

An analysis of class responses by institution is provided in Table 5. With only one exception, freshmen satisfaction levels were always higher than satisfaction among continuing students. The one exception was from University C, where continuing students were slightly more satisfied (7.842) than freshmen (7.35) with the availability of admissions and financial aid officers.

This table shows that, overall, the most satisfied group was the freshmen from University B (8.18 average score), with only a slightly higher score than freshmen from University A (8.169). The least satisfied group was the continuing students from University B (7.16).

The highest and lowest satisfaction levels expressed were also within the same institution, with freshmen from University A scoring a 9.0 in response to the environment and friendliness in the admissions and financial aid offices. In contrast, University A's continuing students had a satisfaction level of only 6.6 with the admissions and financial aid officers' ability to answer questions.

Although freshmen at Universities A and B were more satisfied than freshmen at University C, continuing students at University C were more satisfied than their counterparts at the other institutions. While differences between freshmen and continuing students' satisfaction levels exist, the least amount of difference between classes was found

Table 5  
Class Responses by Institution

Question	Univ. A (FR) (N)	Univ. A (Cont) (N)	Univ. B (FR) (N)	Univ. B (Cont) (N)	Univ. C (FR) (N)	Univ. C (Cont) (N)
Ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately respond to questions:						
	7.5 (20)	6.6 (20)	8.5 (20)	7.1 (20)	8.2 (20)	7.789 (19)
Timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions received:						
	7.65 (20)	7.25 (20)	7.4 (20)	6.9 (20)	7.85 (20)	7.737 (19)
Availability of admissions and financial aid officers:						
	7.8 (20)	7.5 (20)	8.1 (20)	7.2 (20)	7.35 (20)	7.842 (19)
Overall impression of environment and friendliness of admissions and financial aid offices:						
	9.0 (20)	7.8 (20)	8.6 (20)	7.25 (20)	8.1 (20)	8.0 (19)
Satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services as compared to other institutions:						
	8.895 (19)	7.632 (19)	8.3 (20)	7.35 (20)	8.2 (20)	8.111 (18)
Average responses:						
	8.169	7.3564	8.18	7.16	7.94	7.8958
Differences between freshmen and continuing average responses:						
	.8126			1.02		.0442



within University C (.0442).

The differences in satisfaction levels by class were significant at the .05 level for three of the five questions. Table 6 specifies the exact significance.

Table 6  
Class Analysis of Variance

Question	Freshmen (N)	Continuing (N)	Significance of F
Ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately respond to questions	8.07 (56)	7.16 (55)	.02*
Timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions received	7.55 (56)	7.36 (55)	.676
Availability of admissions and financial aid officers	7.8 (59)	7.58 (57)	.530
Overall impression of environment and friendliness of admissions and financial aid offices	8.56 (59)	7.74 (57)	.001**
Satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services as compared to other institutions	8.46 (59)	7.68 (57)	.010*

\*Significant at .05 level.

\*\*Highly significant at .01 level.

This table shows that there was a significant difference in satisfaction levels between freshmen and continuing students with regard to the following factors:

1. The ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately answer questions;
2. The impression of the environment and friendliness in the admissions and financial aid offices; and
3. The overall satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services as compared to other institutions.

Therefore, the minor hypothesis that there was no difference in student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services between freshmen and continuing students was rejected.

#### Additional Comments Regarding Admissions and Financial Aid

The final question in the phone survey gave the students an opportunity to elaborate on their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the admissions and financial aid services at their respective institutions. A total of only twenty-two comments were received (18.3 percent of the sample). The comments were consistent with the numerical scores outlined above.

Table 7  
Summary of Comments Received<sup>a</sup>

Institution	Class	Comments
A	Fr.	Staff was friendly; very good compared to other schools. (2) Communication problem between financial aid office, family and outside agencies.
A	Cont.	Good service compared to other schools; no problems experienced. (2) Financial aid office not as helpful as a senior. Poor communication with regard to policies and requirements. (2) Inefficient process at registration.
B	Fr.	Staff has been attentive; very pleased with services. (2) Very slow process for both admissions and financial aid.
B	Cont.	Financial aid decisions not as fast as admissions'. Very unorganized, bureaucratic financial aid process; expected more from a smaller university.
C	Fr.	Admissions and financial aid staff always available and friendly; very satisfied with process. (4) Financial aid information too slow. Specific confusion with college work-study and loan applications.
C	Cont.	Admissions and financial aid staff very helpful. Once the staff members could be contacted, they were always helpful.

<sup>a</sup>Numbers in parentheses after the statement represent the frequency of that statement.

The major problems identified were with communication and efficiency, but students also acknowledged the

friendliness and assistance provided by admissions and financial aid personnel.

#### Satisfaction with Other Campus Services

The remaining four questions in the phone survey were included to help the students focus their evaluation on several different campus services, not just admissions and financial aid. By including such questions, student satisfaction levels with admissions and financial aid services could be compared to satisfaction with other campus services. The questions were designed to appropriately relate to the freshmen and continuing students' experience at their respective institutions. (See Appendix A for the specific questions.)

While the specific responses to these questions were not of immediate concern for this study, the overall average response was used as a basis for comparison. The overall mean response to the questions on admissions and financial aid was 7.7818. By comparison, the other service questions received an overall average response of 7.315. A complete summary of the specific responses received to these questions can be found in Appendix D.

The inclusion of these miscellaneous questions provided a basis for comparison of student satisfaction levels. By observation only, the pattern of responses to these questions seems to vary from the responses to the admissions and financial aid questions. The extent of satisfaction

between freshmen and continuing students on admissions and financial aid issues is much more consistent than with the other service questions.

### Summary

The following statements summarize the major findings of this research:

1. The range of student responses indicated varying levels of satisfaction between freshmen and continuing students, as well as among the three institutions.

2. Students from University C scored a slightly higher level of satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services than students from either University A or University B.

3. The results did not show any statistically significant differences in student satisfaction levels with admissions and financial aid services of different organizational structures.

4. Freshmen were significantly more satisfied than continuing students on certain questions regarding admissions and financial aid services.

5. The minimal difference between freshmen and continuing students' mean responses was found in University C.

6. The inclusion of questions assessing student satisfaction with other campus services provided evidence that, overall, students were slightly more satisfied with

admissions and financial aid services than with other services provided on their respective campuses.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if the organizational structure of an institution's admissions and financial aid offices was related to student satisfaction with the services provided by these offices. A random sample of students was chosen for this survey, based on their enrollment at one of three institutions identified as having different organizational patterns of admissions and financial aid offices. The students' satisfaction levels were determined by the use of a telephone survey.

The results from this research did not indicate a statistically significant difference in student satisfaction levels between the different institutional organizational structures. However, there did prove to be a significant difference in satisfaction levels between freshmen and continuing students, with freshmen being more satisfied with services than continuing students.

#### Conclusions

The results and conclusions achieved from this study should be considered within the following context:

1. An important variable, not controlled for within this study, was the attitude and effectiveness of personnel within each institution's admissions and financial aid office. Regardless of the organizational structure implemented, the people responsible for working with the students can affect the extent of student satisfaction.

2. The survey for this study was conducted during the middle of the Fall semester, 1985, approximately six months after the majority of activity surrounding the admissions and financial aid processes.

Although there were no significant statistical differences in student satisfaction levels between different organizational structures, the following important conclusions have been drawn from this research:

1. Satisfaction levels between freshmen and continuing students were significantly different, with freshmen being more satisfied with admissions and financial aid services.

2. By observation only, there appeared to be less of a difference between freshmen and continuing students' satisfaction in University C, the institution operating with an enrollment management concept.

3. The greatest amount of overall student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services came from University C.

4. The only instance where continuing students were more satisfied than freshmen occurred at University C.



### Implications

The results of this research have implications for admissions and financial aid professionals, as well as all of higher education. The marked differences in student satisfaction levels between freshmen and continuing students send a signal to higher education administrators. Recent trends of declining numbers of high school graduates have caused institutions of higher education to concentrate more time, money and energy on recruitment of new students. This increased effort, however, could, unintentionally, have negative effects on the already-enrolled student. A lack of information, staff time and attention could be contributing to the continuing students' dissatisfaction. Dissatisfied students tend to transfer to other institutions, or dropout altogether, thus contributing to high campus attrition rates. This research focuses on some areas in which institutions could concentrate to improve campus retention.

The lack of statistically significant differences between organizational structures implies that organizational structure does not relate to student satisfaction with office services. However, organizational structure is only part of the much larger perspective on a college campus. Staff attitudes and institutional philosophy affect the extent of satisfaction students will have with their college experience. College and university administrators, therefore, need to examine not only

institutional staffing and organizational patterns, but goals and philosophies developed and practiced in support of achieving maximum student satisfaction.

The results of this research neither support nor discount the benefits of an enrollment management concept. However, this study does raise more questions about the effectiveness of enrollment management. The institution functioning with an enrollment management model (University C) proved to have a lesser difference in satisfaction levels between freshmen and continuing students. Students from this institution also scored the highest with regard to overall satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services. Further study is necessary in this area to test these occurrences, but these results may be important factors to institutions considering a reorganization of campus services.

The most important implication of this study has no relationship to the results, but rather, to the methodology. Creating an avenue for student input and evaluation is an important step for all colleges and universities. Students contacted for this survey were, for the most part, very responsive, eager to participate and displayed careful thought before responding to the questions. They often expressed their gratitude for being requested to provide input. Only one student from the 120 contacted responded as "not interested" and preferred not to

participate in the study.

Colleges and universities have a captive audience within the perimeters of their own campuses. Student attitudes and opinions are a valuable market resource and should be tapped with more frequency and interest.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

A similar research study that examined the relationship between organizational structure and the differences between freshmen and continuing students within those structures would supplement this study. The results from this research indicate differences between freshmen and continuing students, in general, but fail to further assess the affect of organizational structure on those differences.

Another study that analyzed student satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services as compared to other services within the institution would provide further information on institutional effectiveness. Enrollment management encompasses a number of different services and the more that is known about the delivery of those services, the more successful institutions can be in working with their student populations.

A similar survey assessing satisfaction levels of parents of college-bound students would provide additional market analyses for colleges and universities. Parents are becoming more sophisticated consumers, concerned with financial obligations, as well as the academic quality of an

institution.

A replication of this study closer to the actual processing of admissions and financial aid application may yield different responses. The immediacy of a concern or issue, and the passing of time, may affect the extent of student satisfaction.

This specific study included only undergraduate students, with a simple distinction between freshmen and continuing students. A similar study, further dividing the classes into sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students, could result in additional insight into satisfaction levels. Similarly, a longitudinal study of entering freshmen, surveyed four years later as seniors, could help in determining the variables affecting the students' levels of satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services. Change in attitude can result from maturation, increased cynicism, a decline in idealism, or other results of the natural growth process. A study that considered all these factors would contribute greatly to the body of knowledge regarding student attitudes.

Finally, a study that assessed the satisfaction levels of non-traditional students as compared to traditional students would be very beneficial. This study did not make that distinction but, as the average age of college students continues to climb, the ability of institutions to meet the needs of older students will be a major issue.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TELEPHONE SURVEYS

### Telephone Survey

The conversation will begin with a general introduction and a referral to the letter sent a few weeks earlier referring to the study. Immediately following, I will begin the survey, letting the student know that I will be asking them ten questions related to their satisfaction with certain aspects of their institution. The survey will begin as follows:

To what extent have you been satisfied with the following at (NAME) University:

Dissatisfied	Satisfied
0-----	-----10
-----5-----	

1. The freshman orientation program?
2. The information you received regarding on-campus housing?
3. The registration procedure?
4. The ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately respond to your questions about (NAME) University?
5. The timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions received from (NAME) University?
6. The availability of admissions and financial aid officers to discuss and respond to your questions?
7. The information you received regarding student activities?
8. Your overall impression of the environment and friendliness of the admissions and financial aid offices?
9. Compared to other institutions you examined, how satisfied are you with (NAME)'s admissions and financial aid services?
10. Is there anything you would like to tell me about your satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the admissions and financial aid services at (NAME) University that I have not touched upon in our conversation?



## Telephone Survey

The conversation will begin with a general introduction and a referral to the letter sent a few weeks earlier referring to the study. Immediately following, I will begin the survey, letting the student know that I will be asking them ten questions related to their satisfaction with certain aspects of their institution. The survey will begin as follows:

To what extent have you been satisfied with the following at (NAME) University:

Dissatisfied 0-----5-----10 Satisfied

1. The library facilities on campus?
2. The food service provided on campus?
3. The opportunities for involvement on (NAME) campus?
4. The ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately respond to your questions about (NAME) University?
5. The timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions received from (NAME) University?
6. The availability of admissions and financial aid officers to discuss and respond to your questions?
7. The quality of classroom instruction you've experienced?
8. Your overall impression of the environment and friendliness of the admissions and financial aid offices?
9. Compared to other institutions you examined, how satisfied are you with (NAME)'s admissions and financial aid services?
10. Is there anything you would like to tell me about your satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the admissions and financial aid services at (NAME) University that I have not touched upon in our conversation?

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO STUDENT

Dear

You have been selected as a possible participant in a research study being conducted to determine student satisfaction with specific services provided at (NAME) University. Your participation in this study will involve a maximum of ten minutes of your time, but your input is extremely valuable. (NAME) is one of three institutions in the country selected for this study and you could be one of forty students participating from your university. This research study has been approved by the appropriate personnel at (NAME), who have acknowledged its worth and released your name as a possible participant.

Within the next two weeks, you may be receiving a phone call, asking for your responses to approximately ten questions. These questions will refer to several services provided on your campus and you will be asked to describe the extent of your satisfaction with these services. The actual phone conversation will take no longer than ten minutes and your cooperation will be greatly appreciated! Your responses will be anonymously recorded and at no time will your identity be revealed.

The results received from this survey will be used to analyze the effectiveness of program delivery on different college campuses. Specific results will be provided to officials at your institution to enable them to determine their effectiveness in serving students.

Your participation in this study will prove beneficial to present and future (NAME) students and college students across the country. In advance, thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Michele Kirsch

APPENDIX C

STATISTICAL INFORMATION: ADMISSIONS AND  
FINANCIAL AID QUESTIONS

# ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID QUESTIONS

QUESTION 4: Ability of admissions and financial aid officers to knowledgeably and adequately respond to questions.

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A				
Freshmen	7.5	2.013	3-10	20
Continuing Students	6.6	2.415	2-10	20
University B				
Freshmen	8.5	1.5	5-10	20
Continuing Students	7.1	2.426	2-10	20
University C				
Freshmen	8.2	1.7	5-10	20
Continuing Students	7.789	1.9	5-10	19

QUESTION 5: Timeliness of admissions and financial aid decisions received.

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A				
Freshmen	7.65	1.755	5-10	20
Continuing Students	7.25	2.023	3-10	20
University B				
Freshmen	7.4	2.257	1-10	20
Continuing Students	6.9	2.426	1-10	20
University C				
Freshmen	7.850	2.159	4-10	20
Continuing Students	7.737	2.130	2-10	19

QUESTION 6: Availability of admissions and financial aid officers.

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A				
Freshmen	7.8	1.735	5-10	20
Continuing Students	7.5	2.585	2-10	20
University B				
Freshmen	8.1	1.21	6-10	20
Continuing Students	7.2	1.881	4-10	20
University C				
Freshmen	7.35	1.814	5-10	20
Continuing Students	7.842	2.141	2-10	19

QUESTION 8: Overall impression of environment and friendliness in admissions and financial aid offices.

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A				
Freshmen	9.0	0.973	7-10	20
Continuing Students	7.8	1.673	4-10	20
University B				
Freshmen	8.6	1.142	6-10	20
Continuing Students	7.25	1.333	4-9	20
University C				
Freshmen	8.1	1.21	5-10	20
Continuing Students	8.0	1.453	5-10	19

QUESTION 9: Satisfaction with admissions and financial aid services as compared to other institutions.

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A				
Freshmen	8.895	1.243	5-10	19
Continuing Students	7.632	2.033	4-10	19
University B				
Freshmen	8.3	1.559	4-10	20
Continuing Students	7.35	1.559	3-10	20
University C				
Freshmen	8.2	1.508	5-10	20
Continuing Students	8.111	1.41	5-10	18

APPENDIX D

STATISTICAL INFORMATION: OTHER CAMPUS SERVICE QUESTIONS



## OTHER CAMPUS SERVICE QUESTIONS

## QUESTION 1:

Freshmen: The freshmen orientation program

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A	8.278	1.776	4-10	18
University B	7.579	1.575	5-10	19
University C	8.5	1.539	5-10	20

Continuing Students: The library facilities on campus

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A	7.5	2.705	1-10	20
University B	5.7	2.473	0-10	20
University C	6.789	1.932	3-10	19

## QUESTION 2:

Freshmen: Information you received regarding on-campus housing

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A	7.211	2.076	3-10	19
University B	7.9	1.944	4-10	20
University C	6.8	1.908	4-10	20

Continuing Students: The food service provided on campus

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A	6.0	1.904	3-10	17
University B	5.7	2.473	0-10	20
University C	5.333	1.815	2-8	18

## QUESTION 3:

Freshmen: The registration procedure

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A	7.1	1.861	4-10	20
University B	6.9	2.654	2-10	20
University C	6.8	2.215	3-10	20

Continuing Students: The opportunities for involvement on campus

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A	7.895	1.696	5-10	19
University B	8.1	1.744	5-10	20
University C	7.158	2.387	0-10	19

## QUESTION 7:

Freshmen: The information you received regarding student activities

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A	7.9	1.832	5-10	20
University B	7.5	1.821	4-10	20
University C	7.35	1.785	3-10	20

Continuing Students: The quality of classroom instruction you've experienced

	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Min-Max	N
University A	8.3	1.38	5-10	20
University B	7.6	1.314	3-10	20
University C	7.789	1.357	4-9	19